

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING**

**September 27, 2011**

**A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on September 27, 2011, pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center Boardroom, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.**

**Board members present were Committee Chairman, Dale Venturini, Jim Bennett, Scott Gunn, Letitia Carter, Patrick Butler and Jeffrey Hirsh.**

**Also in attendance were Jim McCarvill, Betty Sullivan and Kim Keough, RICCA; Tim Muldoon, John McGinn, Greg Barbeau, Kathy Masino, Nancy Beauchamp and Amanda Marzullo, RICC; Kristin McGrath, Kristen Adamo, RISC and PWCVB; Larry Lepore, Cheryl Cohen and Kaitlyn Bizier, DDC; Mark Brodner, RI Tourism; Evan Smith, Andrea McHugh and Melanie Saltys, Newport CVB; Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.**

**Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:35 PM and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the August Marketing Committee meeting. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Gunn and seconded by Ms. Carter it was unanimously**

**VOTED:           to approve the minutes of the August meeting**

## **CVB**

**Ms. Venturini asked Kristin McGrath to begin the PWCVB presentation. Ms. McGrath began the Power Point Presentation. She stated that hotel occupancy is holding steady with 2010 and the average daily rate is coming back. Ms. McGrath reported that room nights for Convention Center related bookings have increased over the same period in 2010. Ms. McGrath presented highlights of definite bookings that include the 2012 Amica Ironman competition, and the 2012 Providence Rock N Roll Marathon. Tentative prospects are the National Genealogical Society, American Wind Energy Association and the Affiliated Computer Services – Firehouse Ed Training. Ms. McGrath stated that July and August site inspections by New England League of Middle Schools, Handweavers Guild of America and Golbon went well. Ms. McGrath noted that the CVB had attended tradeshow of the Fraternal Executives Association, CESSE, ASAE Annual Meeting & Exposition and Connect Marketplace. She also noted that convention services were promoted to the National Strength & Conditioning Association and the International Association for Food Protection and a client event was held at the Capital Cities Client Dinner at Connect Marketplace. Ms. McGrath reported several successful meetings and conventions have taken**

place such as the American Urogynecologic Society and LABS21 2011 Annual Meeting.

Ms. Adamo addressed the Committee and described marketing and advertising initiatives. Ms. Adamo reported that the web-based bid book for the meetings market has been completed and a new mobile web site has launched. Ms. Adamo stated that the CVB is working on a plan to effectively use QR codes in the meetings market. Ms. Adamo also reported the Rhode Island Sports Commission web site is being embedded with video of past events. Ms. Adamo noted that the CVB suggested the Peace Love Studio at the Dunk to PBN for their corporate outing. Ms. Adamo said that the CVB is working with Major League Gaming on media sponsorships and college promotions. She also said that the CVB is coordinating a New York media event for November. Mr. Bennett asked questions about the New York trip. Ms. Adamo explained that meetings would be set up with travel and special interest publications to promote Rhode Island as a visitor destination. Mr. Bennett mentioned that Board members might want to participate in some of these out of state meetings and trade shows in their area of expertise to see first hand the work that is being done.

Ms. Adamo reported that John Gibbons and Amanda Marzullo are working on a bid for the National Sports Commission. Ms. McGrath said that the sports market is strong in the area and that we host many road races.

## **DUNKIN' DONUTS CENTER**

**Ms. Venturini called upon Cheryl Cohen to present the Dunkin' Donuts Center report. Ms. Cohen reported that advertising contracts were signed with Dippin' Dots, RIPTA, Blue Cross, United Way, URI Providence Campus, IBEW Local 99 and Gardner-Connell and we are in negotiations with Steingold Volvo, Ardente/Waterspot, Audi Warwick, Fat Belly's and Raymour & Flanigan. Ms. Cohen stated that party suites are sold for Get Motivated, Josh Groban, TSO evening show and Jeff Dunham. She noted that So You Think You Can Dance, Freestyle Rush, Straight No Chaser and the TSO afternoon show there are party suites still available. Ms. Cohen said that 5 luxury suites are unsold and are now being marketed by the PSE. Ms. Cohen reported on event press and other media coverage and presented an update on social media. Ms. Cohen said that we now have 4,848 monthly active users up 1,393 from last week. Ms. Cohen reported on event press coverage for the month of September and the advertising value of earned media. Ms. Cohen presented a list of upcoming events. Mr. Gunn asked if there were any restrictions on face book during events. Ms. Cohen said there are some and there are contesting rules. Mr. Hirsh asked if there was any interest from Hasbro in the suites. Ms. Cohen stated that Providence Entertainment & Sports is now in contact with Hasbro.**

**Discussions ensued regarding upcoming events. Mr. Lepore noted**

that tickets for Rascal Flats would go on sale November 14th. Mr. Lepore also noted that we are working hard to sign the Drop Kick Murphy's for a St. Patrick's Day concert.

Ms. Venturini noted that the Marketing Committee is an opportunity to bring together partners in the tourism industry from Newport and the State as well as any other sections of the State that wish to participate. Mr. Brodner stated that at PowWow all regions work together and host travel and group tours.

Ms. Venturini recalled that Ms. Cohen had in the past given a tutorial on how sales are made. She asked that at the October meeting be a learning experience. Noting that there are new opportunities to purchase tickets using a cell phone or other electronic means Ms. Venturini said the meeting would be a great time to educate the Committee.

## **CONVENTION CENTER**

Mr. McGinn began the Convention Center's report. Mr. McGinn reported that the 2012 revenue goals for the Convention Center are \$8.7 million up \$121,107 from 2011. Mr. McGinn said that in order to reach that goal \$136,000 is needed each month. Mr. McGinn presented event activity for the period August 22 – September 23, 2011. He said that there are many tentative events that the staff is working to secure. Mr. McGinn reported that contracted events

include Headliners National Competition, a cheer and dance competition and Netroots National Convention that will be here in June of 2012 for which we thank our congressional delegation, state officials and local ambassadors. Mr. McGinn reported on other contracted events saying that the Society for In Vitro Biology has contracted for June 2013, the Festival Fete-Locally Grown Art, Food & Merriment for November 2011, the International Association for Food Protection, July 2012, the RI Federation of Teachers & Health Professional this December and the New England League of Middle Schools has signed a contract to extend their event until 2013. Mr. McGinn stated that the NELMS has fallen off the past couple of years and that we are looking at ways to help them increase attendance.

## **VETS**

Mr. Habi reported that the VETS bookings are doing better. He said that dance competitions are always welcome and interest from dance studios has grown.

Ms. Carter had some questions on the web-site. She asked if the 100th Birthday Celebration of Mahalia Jackson was on the site. Mr. Habi stated that he needed the collateral that he has not yet received as well as a signed contract and proof of insurance. Mr. Habi said that he has been waiting for some time for this information. Mr. Habi was pleased to report that Brown University and the Providence College music departments have inquired about using the theater for

**a joint performance.**

**Discussions ensued regarding the renovations. Mr. Hirsh asked Mr. Habi if he was happy with the work that has been done so far. Mr. Habi said that he is very pleased and that the renovation seems to be a smooth process. Ms. Sullivan discussed banners and signs.**

## **RIEDC**

**Mr. Brodner reported that the Welcome Center on Rt. 95 may not be funded in this year's budget. Ms. Venturini said that it will not be funded and that it is a shame that visitors will miss an opportunity to pick up brochures about the State. She noted that there are no concessions at the center and that travelers can leave the highway to find fast food restaurants and gas stations. Ms. Venturini stated that she is very upset that this decision was not communicated to the people in the industry. Mr. Gunn said that he travels often and has noticed welcome signs in different states and that our sign is lacking in size and graphics. Mr. Brodner said that the welcome sign should be updated and that the Governor has remarked on it.**

**Mr. Brodner reported an award was earned for the State's use of social media at the Big E. Mr. Brodner noted that a contingent of tour group operators is going to Israel to promote Rhode Island.**

**Mr. Hirsh asked if the tourism division had \$1 million just for**

advertising what would be the priority. Mr. Brodier said that would be wonderful and he would give the matter some thought. Mr. Brodier said that he would be meeting with the Governor and other representatives to remind them that the tourism industry has shown growth in these poor economic times. He said that originally his budget was cut in half but has since been restored. Mr. Gunn offered his assistance with contacts in Israel.

## **Newport CVB**

Evan Smith brought with him a video presentation on the America's Cup Races that was very informative and entertaining. Mr. Smith reported that the trial races would run from June 23 – July 1, 2012. Mr. Brodier stated that it will be a statewide effort to host all the visitors to Newport next year.

Ms. Venturini noted that the term of the Authority's appointment to the PWCVB Board, Tom DiMasi, is about to expire and asked that he be reappointed. Upon a motion duly made by Jeff Hirsh and seconded by Scott Gunn it was unanimously

**VOTED:** to reappoint Tom DiMasi as the Authority's representative to the PWCVB Board.

Ms. Venturini noted that she had met with local meteorologists to keep them aware of their effect on tourism. She said that a simple



**thing like partly cloudy changed to mostly sunny makes a huge difference. Ms. Venturini stated that a scholarship fund has been set up in memory of Steve Marra.**

**Ms. Venturini asked if there was any other business. Hearing none she asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Bennett and seconded by Mr. Gunn it was unanimously**

**VOTED: to adjourn at 2:10 PM**